

REMARKS

In the November 26, 2004 Office Action, claims 2-8, 13 and 17 stand rejected over prior art. Claims 1, 9-12, 15, 16 and 18-21 are allowed.

Status of Claims and Amendments

In response to the November 26, 2004 Office Action, Applicant has amended independent claim 2 as indicated above. Thus, claims 1-13 and 15-21 are pending, with claims 1, 2, 9 and 20 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following comments.

Interview Summary

On February 8, 2005, the undersigned conducted a personal interview with Examiner Johnson, who is in charge of the above-identified patent application. During the interview, a brief description of the invention was given. The indication of allowable subject matter by the previous Examiner was discussed. It was stated that full credit to the indication of allowable subject matter by the previous Examiner would be given. A proposed amendment to claim 2, which added the previously indicated allowable subject matter from claim 1, was discussed. Examiner Johnson stated that the proposed amendment of claim 2 would distinguish over the prior art of record. Applicant wishes to thank Examiner Johnson for the opportunity to discuss the above-identified patent application during the Interview of February 8, 2005.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103

In paragraph 2 of the Office Action, claims 2-8, 13 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,099,425 to Kondo in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,730,012 to Juy.

While Applicant does not agree with this rejection, in the interest of swift prosecution, independent claim 2 has been amended to include subject matter that has been indicated as allowable. Independent claim 2 now recites, *intern alia*, that the wider of the first and second mounting flanges is arranged such that a majority of its axial width is located outside the mounting area in an axial direction. Paragraph 3 of the November 26, 2004 Office Action indicated that claim 1 was allowable because “the prior art does not disclose or teach providing a majority of the larger mounting flange outside the mounting area defined by the front and rear planes.”

This limitation has been added to claim 2. Clearly, this arrangement is *not* disclosed or suggested by Kondo or Juy or any other prior art of record. It is well settled in U.S. patent law that the mere fact that the prior art can be modified does *not* make the modification obvious, unless the prior art *suggests* the desirability of the modification. Accordingly, the prior art of record lacks any suggestion or expectation of success for combining the patents to create the Applicant's unique arrangement with the wider of the first and second mounting flanges being arranged such that a majority of its axial width is located outside the mounting area in an axial direction.

Moreover, Applicant believes that dependent claims 3-8, 13 and 17 are also allowable over the prior art of record in that they depend from independent claim 2, and therefore are allowable for the reasons stated above. Also, the dependent claims are further allowable because they include additional limitations. Thus, Applicant believes that since the prior art of record does not disclose or suggest the invention as set forth in independent claim 2, the prior art of record also fails to disclose or suggest the inventions as set forth in the dependent claims.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn in view of the above comments and amendments.

Allowable Subject Matter

In paragraph 3 of the Office Action, claims 1, 9-12, 15, 16 and 18-21 were indicated as allowed. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1-13 and 15-21 are now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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